

DPH Announces Second Negative Test Result For Coronavirus

DOVER – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is announcing that one of two pending test results for 2019 novel coronavirus (now known as COVID-19) has come back negative. The individual has been discharged from the hospital and is continuing to recover from their underlying illness at home. Test results for one other person are still pending from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are expected in the coming days. The individual, a New Castle County resident, remains hospitalized until test results are returned. No additional information is being provided about either individual.

In addition, DPH continues to monitor 13 asymptomatic travelers (travelers who are not sick with fever/cough/shortness of breath) arriving in the U.S. from mainland China after Feb. 3. The CDC recommended that such travelers be monitored for 14 days after their return. During the 14 days after their return from China, these persons are being asked to remain at home while self-monitoring for symptoms. If any of these persons shows symptoms of fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, they should call DPH right away to determine next steps, which may include transport to a local hospital for evaluation, isolation and testing.

DPH is emphasizing that these individuals are not sick, and exhibit no symptoms consistent with coronavirus. Individuals being monitored for symptoms are NOT considered Patients Under Investigation (PUI), which are those individuals who meet criteria for testing based on symptoms and travel history. DPH began reporting the number of returning travelers being monitored, as well as PUIs, on its website <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph> on Monday, Feb. 10. Numbers will be updated every Tuesday and Friday afterward.

Individuals who traveled from China prior to Feb. 3, 2020, are asked to self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after their return. If they become ill within 14 days of their return, they should avoid contact with others, and call ahead to their health care provider to discuss their recent travel, symptoms, and next steps. The health care provider should in turn contact DPH to coordinate next steps. Individuals who returned from China prior to Feb. 3, 2020, do not need to be excluded from school or work. DPH continues to encourage employers and administrators to review their own health policies to make decisions regarding exclusion from work/school for these individuals.

Both CDC and DPH continue to state that the risk of COVID-19 spreading to the general public remains low. While the number of cases are increasing in the U.S., there is no spread of the virus in the community. Risk is based on exposure. Only those individuals with recent travel to China or who have had contact with someone who has had recent travel and is ill, have an increased risk of becoming ill. For persons without an associated travel risk, it should be assumed that most respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19. As of Feb. 3, 2020, all persons returning from Hubei Province in China, as well as symptomatic persons returning from mainland China, will be quarantined for 14 days near a United States airport of entry, per federal orders.

DPH officials are also emphasizing that Asian American/Pacific Islander individuals are at no higher risk of carrying the 2019 novel coronavirus than any other individual. DPH urges people not to make assumptions that someone might be ill or could become ill based on their accent, background or skin color.

Most Delawareans are at greater risk of contracting seasonal influenza than coronavirus. COVID-19 has not been found to be spreading widely in the U.S., so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. The best

guidance is to take the same everyday precautions recommended for avoiding colds and flu:

- Get your flu vaccine if you have not already.
- Stay home when you are sick and avoid well people as much as possible.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Practice good hand hygiene – frequently wash hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.